

Pennsylvania Association of Numismatists


CLARION



VOL. 14, no. 3 (issue no. 47)

\$5.00

SEPTEMBER, 1997



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Contents

President Richard Cross	President's Message.....4
Regional Vice-Presidents West: Corleen Chesonis Central: Gerald Krupa S. Central: Kerry Wetterstrom Northeast: Donald Hastie Southeast: Thomas Sebring	PA Boy wins \$25,000 Scholarship.....5
Corresponding Secretary Kerry Wetterstrom	Scene on \$10 Note Identified by Mark Hotz.....6
Recording Secretary Gerald Krupa	Programs at PAN Show.....7
Treasurer Chester Trzcinski	Let's Design a PA Quarter! by Dick Duncan.....8
Clarion Editor Richard Duncan	A BIG Time at the ANA Show by Dick Duncan.....9
Convention Staff Donald Carlucci Charles Culleiton Patrick McBride John Paul Sarosi Kathy Sarosi Eileen Kaminsky	1877 Indian Cents - In Depth by Richard Snow.....10
Chairman-of-the-Board Donald Carlucci	<u>CLARION</u> Ad Dates & Rates.....15
Board of Governors Dr. Nelson Page Aspen John Burns Richard Cross Charles Culleiton Richard Duncan Rodger Hershey	Memorable Visits to the Mint by Kari Brower.....16
Past Presidents Samson Paguia Loren Ecoff Donald Carlucci John Eshbach Robert Matylewicz Wayne Homren	Show Calendar.....19
Honorary Members Frank Gasparro Gilroy Roberts (d)	New World Coin Books.....20 ...and a Coin Honors Them.....21
	Encased Postage (MONEY TALKS)....22
	<u>Advertisers</u>
	John Paul Sarosi, Johnstown, PA..2&23
	Red Rose C.C. Show.....15
	Richard Cross, Fogelsville, PA.....15
	Gerald Krupa, Lemont, PA.....19
	Steinmetz Coins, Lancaster, PA.....24

President's Message

The 19th annual Convention of the PA. Association of Numismatists will be here before you know it - October 24, 25 and 26 at the Pittsburgh ExpoMart in Monroeville. Dealers: Make sure you have your table(s) reserved by contacting Bourse Chair John Paul Sarosi. And Collectors: Reserve those dates, and if needed, contact the Radisson for rooms.



Our "Coins for A's" program continues to be a great success. We have received strong publicity in the numismatic press, for that as well as for the seminar for youngsters at our spring show. As a matter of fact, it was interesting to see a Letter to the Editor in the August 4 issue of Coin World. The letter, from an Ohio youngster, said he had read about PAN's Coins for A's program and laments the fact that he's ineligible (not being a PA resident)...because "I am very interested in coins and I get a lot of A's on my grade card." In any case, donations of coins for this program are still needed - and appreciated. Please send to Don Carlucci, 401 Meadow St., Cheswick, PA 15024. Thank you!

There's excitement generating for our hobby. Recent record prices for rarities certainly capture headlines - such as the \$1.8 million winning bid for an 1804 Dollar at the April 8 Eliasberg Auction in New York City. A Chester County, Pennsylvania youngster won a \$25,000 college scholarship from the Professional Numismatists Guild last month. And it now appears very likely that we'll soon see the 50-state commemorative quarters going into production - to be issued over a ten-year period. That should definitely create excitement for collectors and non-collectors alike. See articles on these last two items in this issue of the CLARION.

Our next PAN quarterly meeting will be held in Lancaster at the Red Rose Show this month - 1:00 p.m. Saturday, September 20, at the Farm & Home Center. All members and guests are welcome.

Hope to see you at the PAN Convention next month - where we'll have club meetings, educational programs, exhibits, and of course a bourse with dealers from all across the country, offering just what you have been looking for in numismatics.

Sincerely,

Richard E. Cross
President

PA. Boy Wins \$25,000 Scholarship from P.N.G.

Alexander L. Headley of Chester County, Pennsylvania, 12 years old, has just been announced as the winner of a \$25,000 college scholarship awarded by the Professional Numismatists Guild.

A Critique of U.S. Coins

He was selected for the award for submitting a 28-page essay critiquing current designs on U. S. coins. Beginning seventh grade this fall at Octorara Middle School, Alexander is delighted with this assistance toward his college education, but he has not yet decided on his field of study.

He does know his coins, however. He says he spent a few months working on his essay - right up to the June 1 deadline - and then was away at summer camp when his parents received a phone call announcing his good fortune. The call was made by PNG Secretary, Harlan Berk, to parents William and Lynne Headley -- who, as might be expected, were somewhat overwhelmed.

Presented at A.N.A. Convention

The award was presented officially during the A.N.A. Convention in New York City, at the PNG banquet on Tuesday evening, July 29. Alexander's parents and younger brother, Will, accompanied the winner to the event.

Wilmington C.C. Member

Headley is a member of the Wilmington, Delaware Coin Club, where former president, Jules Reiver (who assisted the youngster with coin photography to accompany his essay) predicts Alexander Headley will be an outstanding member of the coin collecting fraternity. The boy's words appear to confirm the prediction.



Alexander Headley shows one of his favorite U.S. coins - the Walking Liberty Half Dollar. He does not have good comments for our coinage of today.

More than 500 essays were submitted by 11- and 12-year-old students across the United States. They were judged by a panel of 14 numismatists.

"Our Coins Rate Poor-to-Fair"

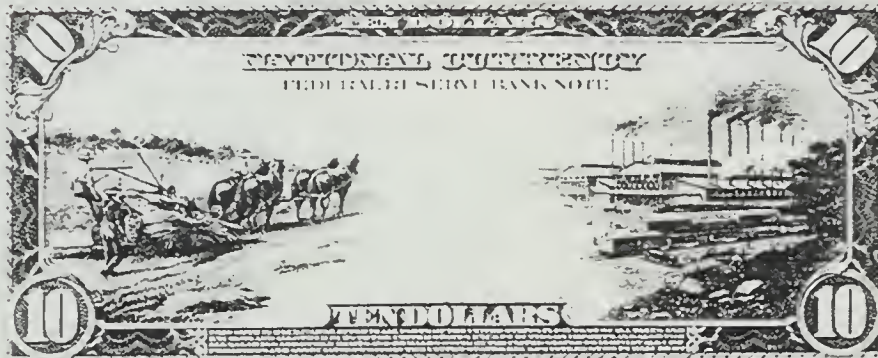
Headley's essay, "A Personal View of American Numismatic Art: The Evolution of 20th Century Coin Designs," included a rating system he devised to determine the artistic value of our coins. His conclusion: Today's U.S. coins are rated "poor to fair." Among his comments: Washington on the Quarter is "lifeless and uninspiring." His conclusion: It's time for a change! His essay included a variety of color photographs.

The contest was part of PNG's educational program that included giving out over 100,000 coin starter boards across the U.S. Second place, a \$10,000 scholarship, went to Brittnei Heisterkamp, 12, of Iowa.

\$10 Federal Reserve Note

Farming Scene Identified

by Mark Hotz



By pure chance, I am able to provide the identity of the farm scene on the back of the \$10 - 1914 Federal Reserve notes (F892-951 & H618-619) and the 1915 and 1918 - \$10 Federal Reserve Bank notes (F810-821 & H620).

Recently, a dealer in York, Pennsylvania showed me a familiar \$10 - 1914 Federal Reserve note, and, playing on my role as co-instructor of the U.S. Paper Money course at the A.N.A. Summer Seminars, added that he knew something about it that I did not. Never wanting to miss an opportunity to play along, added dryly, "I doubt it." Not only was I pleasantly wrong, but I gleaned the rare information I give you now.

Turning to the back of the note, and pointing to the familiar farming scene on the left side, he noted, "This vignette...why it's a farm just down the road." He then produced a large, but yellowed photograph of that same scene, accompanied by a tattered and similarly yellowed news-

paper article, undated and unidentified as to newspaper, but circa 1920. The article carried a photo of that same scene on the back of the \$10 note. It read as follows:

.....

COUNTY FARM SCENE ON 10-DOLLAR NOTE

Federal Reserve Bill Shows Harvesting on
Philip A.Small Acres Original in Washington

The fact that a reproduction of a landscape view, photographed in York County adorns a ten-dollar Federal Reserve note is, no doubt, known to few if any of the citizens of York and York County -- even the favored few who are accustomed to handled [sic] bills of the denomination promiscuously. Such is the case, however. The discovery was made recently by Frank G. Ashbrook, a former York boy, who is employed in the biographical survey department in Washington.

Ashbrook, during a recent visit to the office of J.H. Stevenson,

who has charge of a collection of photographs taken by photographers for the Department of Agriculture, noticed a beautiful hand-colored landscape photograph about the official's desk. Ashbrook, impressed with the familiarity of the view, made a closer inspection and ascertained that the photograph had been taken on the farm of Mrs. Philip Small, in Manchester Township.

Upon being informed that Ashbrook had on several occasions visited the Small farm, Stevenson inquired as to whether Ashbrook knew that the view had been reproduced on a ten-dollar bill issued during the first year of the World War. He then stated that the view had been taken July 9, 1907, by a photographer from the Office of Farm Management, Washington. The photograph is a harvest scene and shows a binder on the Small farm in operation. When the new money issue was authorized, this view was selected to be placed on the Federal Reserve Note.

Since the photographing of United States currency is prohibited by law, it is not possible to print a picture of the bill. The accompanying cut, however, is a reproduction of the original photograph from which the engraving was made.

Frank B. Ashbrook, who was graduated from the local high school in 1910 and from Pennsylvania State College in 1914, is a son of Mrs. Sarah R. Ashbrook, 158 Lafayette Street. During the past several years, he has been employed in various capacities to the United States Department of Agriculture.

Manchester Township is located in south-

ern York County, Pennsylvania, along the border with Maryland. As the other scene which adorns the back of the \$10 - 1914 note has been previously identified as Industry, a mill scene, in Joliet, Illinois, the identification of the farm scene as the Small farm in Manchester Township, York County, Pennsylvania completes the identification of the vignettes on this note. Who says you can't find a needle in a haystack?

My thanks to Robert Faust of Faust's Coins in York for bringing this to my attention.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AT THE PAN SHOW PITTSBURGH EXPOMART

Saturday, October 25

10:30 - Noon

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Noon - 1:00

**Am. Society
of Check Collectors**
Host:: Wayne Homren

1:00 - 2:00

EAC and C-4
Topic: Colonials and N.J. Coppers

2:00-3:00

Civil War Token Society

Numis. Bibliomania Soc.

3:00 - 4:00

"Coins 4 Kids"
Host: Don Carlucci

4:00 - 5:00

Metal Detecting
Host: Ray Williams

.....
*All programs to take place in Meeting
Room at the back of Dealer Bourse.*
.....

Let's Design a PA Quarter!

by Dick Duncan

Yes, it looks like we'll soon be seeing a lot of newly-designed quarters -- 50 of them!

At the ANA Convention in New York City last month, a representative of the U.S. Mint announced that the new quarters - one for each of the 50 states - appear certain of approval by Congress.

The Plan

It's reported that five states will be featured each year, with the state's design on the reverse, while George Washington would continue to appear on the obverse -- very much like the bicentennial quarters, which had Jack Ahr's design of a drummer boy on the reverse. That should certainly result in people taking a second look at their pocket change!

When?

The succession of state designs appearing on the quarter reverses will apparently be the same order as the states entered the union -- with the first 13 coming in the order in which they ratified the Constitution. This means that Delaware will be first, following immediately by Pennsylvania!

Will collectors in Oregon (for example) be able to get the Pennsylvania design, and vice versa?



Yes, each new issue will be distributed across the country. But it might be advisable to pick up a few of each new design within a couple of months of issue - to make sure you get them all.

A Boon to the Hobby

Most likely, this will encourage a great many people to put aside some - or all - of the new coins. And that's likely to mean more new collectors in the future.

Now, Let's Get Busy!

With Pennsylvania's coin slated to be one of the very first issued, it is your chance to consider a good design...so you're ready to submit a winner when Harrisburg (or Washington D.C.) says it's time to do so. What would be good? Some years ago, when the Franklin Mint did a series of state medals, the PA design showed a soldier at Valley Forge. Or, how about an Amish buggy...steel production in Pittsburgh...a Conestoga Wagon ...or the first successful Turnpike? Now...give it your best shot!

A BIG Time at the ANA Show

by Dick Duncan

It was a truly memorable ANA Convention - although "The Big Apple" is not our favorite location for the show. "Our" stands for Lancaster Countians, Jerry Kochel, John Eshbach and Dick Duncan, who frequently team up for such shows. We get along well, and it sure helps the old pocketbook to divide a high-priced room by three! We took the train, a pleasant, three-hour trip, from Lancaster.

High Prices

Speaking of high-priced rooms, the Convention Hotel, Marriott Marquis, provided rooms for the "bargain" price of \$147 (plus tax) per night. We picked the Milford Plaza Ramada, just across the street, for less than 100 smackers. And, hotel food being somewhat large in price, we made the most of a famous, nearby fast-food emporium - particularly for breakfast. Hint: it has a symbol of golden arches. Right. McD's.

The Bad...and the Good

The bourse was a very weak arrangement - split between two floors of the Marriott... and exhibits were on a balcony circling the upper bourse floor. We suspect that few people (other than exhibitors and exhibit judges) got up to see the exhibits.

An Exhibiting Champ

One chap has now exhibited at ANA Shows for 27 years in a row - so he continued the string. That's Jerry Kochel, who displayed one of his favorites: Colonial notes signed by Lancastrian Adam Hubley. He won a second-place award. We doubt that anyone, ever, has matched that many years of exhibiting at the ANA. And Jerry has also won many first-place exhibit awards.

Judging

All three of us served as Exhibit Judges (obviously, Jerry didn't judge in his exhibit category) - as we've all been doing for

15 or more years. Confidentially, John has reached the pinnacle -- that is, he was a judge for the "Best-of-Show."

Great Fun!

As usual, we had a great time at the ANA Convention (regardless of the N.Y.C. drawbacks) - visiting with old friends, viewing lots of impressive coins...and even enjoying some highlights of the city. I took advantage of an ANA bus tour of the city...and another tour took us to the American Numismatic Society headquarters - for a short lecture, a tour and lunch. That outfit is considerably older than the ANA (although membership is smaller).

"On the Town"

The ANA Show was right in the heart of Times Square - which was exciting. I had found out you can stand in line (for about an hour) and get theater tickets for half price - so that's what I did. Thus, the three of us enjoyed "Miss Saigon," a first-rate show. And another evening found the three of us dining in "Windows on the World," located on top of the 110-floor World Trade Center. A great view of the city, with the Hudson River on the left, and the East River on the right. And looking down on the Empire State Building! Yes, the food was terrific, also.

The Rodger Hershey Award

At the show-ending banquet, it was great to view the new "Rodger E. Hershey People's Choice Award" presented for the first time - and Dottie Hershey was there to make the presentation.

Coming to PA - Twice!

The latest news is that the ANA decided to hold its 2000 Convention in Philadelphia, and the Show will be in Pittsburgh in 2005! So get ready, numismatists. If you haven't been to an ANA Show (or been recently), don't miss these two chances!

1877 Indian Cents - the Year in Depth

by Richard Snow, Fly-In LM 1

The 1877 is the key date in the Indian Head series. It is usually that last glaring vacancy which eludes the collector time and time again. Even if the money is available for purchase opportunities, the capture of this date still confounds many a diligent collector. When finally found, the coins are usually disappointing. Many have striking weakness, many more have been cleaned and artificially colored. This is a very hard coin to locate, plain and simple. Why is it so rare? I'll try to answer that question and many others in this article.

All 852,500 cents of 1877 were minted between January 4th and January 25th. The Mint minted no nickel 3 cent pieces or 5 cent pieces in 1877 except for proofs. Did the Mint run out of copper and nickel? Was there a limited demand for minor coins this year? History shows us that 1875 through 1877 were years of some hardship. The post Civil War boom in the North had run out of steam and was falling into a depressionary cycle. Could the economy be to blame for the low production?

For the real answer to the low production of 1877 minor coinage, we



must look back to the Mint Acts of 1864 and 1871. All the copper and nickel cents minted prior to 1864 had no legal tender limit. They didn't need one because of their high metal value. After the change-over to the bronze cent, a small legal tender status was deemed necessary because the new coin, for the first time in U.S. history, had a very low metal value compared to its face value. The new coin was just a token in the eyes of the Congress without some favor of legal tender status. The new bronze cents were given legal tender in amounts under 10 cents.

For small transactions the cents had to be accepted, but what if you had

a bag of them? What if you were a bank and had accumulated a whole room full of them? If you wanted full value for your accumulation of minor coins there was nowhere you could go to exchange them. This was the problem that brought about the Mint Act of March 3, 1871. Basically it said that the Mint would take in bronze cents and two cent pieces, nickel 3 cent and 5 cent pieces at face value in any quantity offered. This got the hoards of coins moving to the Mint where they were melted and re coined into the new coins. Many of the 1864-1870 coins met their fate in this huge meltdown. The newly issued 1871, 1872 and 1873 coins mostly had short round trips. They would be issued into commerce, then go straight into the banks where they were immediately shipped back to the Mint and melted.

By 1874, someone got the bright idea to just go ahead and reissue the older coins alongside the newly minted coins. This was done with both the cent and the minor nickel coinage. This process would require a separate accounting from the regular mintage, so a ledger, "Record of Minor Coins Redeemed 1871-1883" was begun. (See Steve/Flynn p.193) Table "A" below shows redeemed and reissued cents for the years 1874-1877 along with the mintage of new coins. The "Total Issue" column shows a combination of newly

minted and reissued coinage.

Table A "Coins minted, redeemed and reissued 1874-1877"

<u>Year</u>	<u>Mintage</u>	<u>Redeemed</u>	<u>Reissued</u>	<u>Total Issue</u>
1874	14,187,500	4,051,908	372,500	14,560,000
1875	13,528,000	3,937,872	3,926,000	17,454,000
1876	7,944,000	5,932,723	5,599,500	13,543,500
1877	852,500	9,908,148	9,821,500	10,674,000

As discussed earlier, in the years 1875 through 1877 there was a severe depression in the country, so the need for additional coinage diminished. This slow economy may have forced holders of quantities of minor coins to redeem them for money that could easily be used. Table "A" above clearly shows that the issuance of coinage didn't appreciably slow down, only the issuance of new coinage. In 1877, the coins sent for redemption by banks eagerly trying to get their cash flow healthy seems to have buried the Mint in cents. A combination of low demand and high inflow of redeemed coins is the cause of low mintage.

If you had been one of the few collectors who was intent on getting a shiny new 1877 Indian Cent from your local bank - good luck! Table "A" above shows that you would have had a less than one-in-ten chance of finding a bank that got new cents delivered. Most banks got older cents in their shipments.

Proof Issues

No precise mintage figure exists for the proof 1877 Indian, but enough information is available to make an

educated guess. It is known that 510 "Silver" sets were sold which included the 5 silver coins, 2 nickel coins and the cent. Additionally, there were about 400 "Nickel" sets struck, which included just the cent and 2 nickel coins, of which we know 260 were mailed out, with the unknown remainder being sold over the counter in Philadelphia. The estimated mintage of 910 comes from this figure. Since only 260 "Nickel" sets were mailed out, possibly only 770 were sold. The leftover coins were possibly melted, although I believe they were released into circulation.

The overall quality of 1877 Proof Indians is moderate, with full red examples very difficult to find. Most have light hairlines from widespread use of camel hair brushes during the mid 1900s to remove excess dust and dirt. The date seems to tone to an olive brown color with many coming rather streaky. The three known reverse dies are all Type 3 reverses with the bold N in ONE, which is quite different from the one known reverse business strike die which is a Type 1 with a shallow N in ONE.

Values for the Proof 1877 Indian have always been exceptionally high when compared to other proof dates of similar rarity, such as 1876. This of course is due to mint state collector pressure. However, the proof

issue always lags behind the much more desired mint state examples of the 1877 in the same grades. This is due to the fact that there are usually more collectors of mint state Indians than there are of proof issues.

The surviving proof population is very close to its original mintage. About 300 have survived unimpaired. Another 500 may exist as cleaned, retoned, circulated and otherwise impaired specimens.

Proof Die listing:

Note: the codes in parentheses are date position markers. It designates where the left edge of the 1 in the date is positioned over the denticles perpendicular to the base of the 1: (B) = Between, (LE) = Left Edge, (LH) = Left Half, (C) = Centered, (RH) = Right Half, (RE) = Right Edge.

PR1: These are of moderate to exceptional quality and may constitute about 50% of the survivors.

Obv: Die 1: (LH). Date equally spaced.
Rev: Die 1872A: Type 3, Bold N in ONE. A defective die in use beginning in 1872 with a bulging right pennant on the T. Die stage 2; Repolished after 1876 usage. A diagonal die line now seen from the top of C to the base of O. Some leaves merge into the field at 3:00.

PR2: These are usually exceptional quality and constitute about 30% of the survivors.

Obv: Die 2: (B). 77 spaced fairly close. Small lumps on first 7 and on the neck.

Rev: Die A: Type 3. No die markers noted.

PR3: Usually weak denticles. The scarcest of the die pairs. Most of the coins from this die pair are of sub-standard quality with weak denticles and more prooflike fields, prob-

ably due to being singly struck to save time for some rush order. A small group have seen light circulation - no doubt their early owners spent them after replacing them with better examples. Others are offered as prooflike mint state examples. Since these have the Type 3 (Bold N) reverse, they are easily distinguished from the true mint state examples which have the type 1 (shallow N) reverse. Walter Breen's personal example was found to be of this die pair when it was sold by his estate through Eagle Eye Rare Coins in 1994. It is curious that his listing in his Proof Encyclopedia (1977) lists only this one die, which it turns out makes up only a minority of 20% of the surviving examples.

Obv: Die 3: (LE). Date equally spaced as in #1, but with a few small raised lumps on neck. These are caused by die rust pits. Rev: Die B: Type 3. A minute diagonal die line can be seen in the denticles just above 9:00. Middle olive leaf away from denticles.

Business Strikes

Any casual collector can tell you that 1877 is a rare date. The mintage figure alone reveals that. As shown above, the true rarity of the 1877 really comes from the way it was distributed. Banks had a one-in-ten chance of getting 1877 cents during that year. Most all of the examples minted went right into circulation and stayed there for many years. It was only in the 1920s and 30s that collector demand increased for the date. Most collectors up to that time were satisfied with having a proof

example in their collection. Premiums started to be charged by dealers in the late 1930s. Retail lists after World War II show prices over \$10 for Fine examples, mirroring the great difficulty dealers were having in finding this date for inventory. By that time, most were recovered from circulation. Most of the 1877 Indian Cents were melted in the years prior to 1920. Table "B" below is my estimation of the number of survivors.

Table B "Surviving 1877 Circulation Strikes"
 below G G-VG Fine-VF XF-AU MS
 (800-1200) (750-1000) (500-750) (300-500) (700-900)

The combined estimated survivors total some 3000 to 4500. Not by any means a rare coin, but a very difficult date compared to the rest of the series. Mint state survivors number some 400 original pieces and probably another 500 cleaned, or otherwise impaired pieces. No original full rolls have ever come to light, however a half roll was slowly placed on the market in 1933-34. During the 1960s a big problem in the coin business was coin "processors." These criminals would take nice original VF or XF coins and brush them to bright red with steel wool, or wire wheels. These whizzed coins were sold as BU coins at discount prices. What is left today for collectors are a tremendous amount of problem and cleaned coins.

All regular issue 1877s were struck using one die which is of the Type 1

reverse hub. This reverse has a shallow N in the word ONE. The 1877 obverse dies all have shallow diamond devices on the lower ribbon, which is why trying to find "full diamond" XFs and AUs is rather difficult. A majority of these survivors are weakly struck, also causing problems for collectors. There are no varieties of interest known for this year.

Regular dies listing:

S1: These are usually slightly weak to very weak on the right side of both sides due to skewed dies. About 70% of the survivors are from this die pair.

Obv: Die 4:(C). Date spaced close together, 18 just touch. Die stage 1 shows no die cracks and is normally well struck. Die Stage 2 shows a die crack from the denticles between the U in the legend and 1 in the date.

Rev: Die C. Type 1, with the shallow (not weak) N in ONE, near the base. Die Stage 1 shows no clash marks. Die Stage 2 shows one light clash mark.

S2: Usually well struck. About 30% of the survivors are from this die pair.

Obv: Die 5: (LH). Date spaced apart. There is a raised die dot at the junction of the hair and neck just above the ribbon. Die stage 2 shows a die crack from the denticles below the 1 in the date through the last 7.

Rev: Die C. Die stage 2, see above. Die Stage 3 shows multiple light clash marks.

Counterfeit 1877s

In addition to the survivors of genuine pieces listed above, I would guess that there may be as many as 1000 counterfeits either known to be counterfeits or still lurking in collections or dealer cases waiting to be attributed. These coins are mostly in the Fine to AU grade range. The best way to tell a counterfeit is

to recognize what the genuine pieces look like. A little basic knowledge about die and coin making helps here. Generally, I would say the safest way to avoid buying a counterfeit is to do two things: Buy only from reputable dealers who have knowledge of counterfeit detection; and don't buy any coin that is in the least way suspicious.

Transfer die counterfeits are made by transferring the entire obverse design from a genuine 1877, while the reverse will be made from a less expensive coin from the 1900s. The typical counterfeit will have the Type 3 reverse used from 1871 to 1909 with the bold N in ONE. Since this feature is seen on all proof issues as well, a die comparison should be made against known proof dies. Beware of coins with squared rims and sharp edges. Altered date counterfeits can be discovered by comparison to the die listings above.

The threat of buying a counterfeit has diminished somewhat from being a major problem in the 1970s to an occasional nuisance today thanks to fine efforts over the years by the American Numismatic Association which operates an attribution bureau (ANAAB) for members. In addition, any legitimate dealer should offer a lifetime guarantee on authenticity, so make sure you know who you're dealing with.

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The above article appeared in the Fall, 1996 edition of "Longacre's Ledger," official publication of the Flying Eagle and Indian Cent Collectors Society (The "Fly-In Club"), and is reprinted with permission.

Sources:

This article was modified from a hypertext version by the same author available on the Internet at the Eagle Eye Rare Coin's web site <http://indiancentcom.Breen,Walter H.> "Complete Encyclopedia of U.S. and Colonial Proof Coins" F.C.I. Press Albertson, NY 1977, Julian, R.W. "The 1877 Indian Head Cent" Coins magazine, October 1992. Snow, Richard E. "Flying Eagle and Indian Head Cents" Eagle Eye Press, Tucson, AZ 1992. Steve, Larry R. & Flynn, Kevin J. "A Comprehensive Guide to Selected Rare Flying Eagle and Indian Cent varieties" Nuvista Press, Jarrettsville, MD 1995.

Author Richard Snow, Fly-In LM 1, is past president of the Fly-In Club and its co-founder. He is co-owner, together with Brian Wagner, of Eagle Eye Rare Coins, Inc.

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CLARION ADVTG. DATES & RATES

Now published 4 times a year.

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Half Page	30.	100.
Full Page	50.	170.
Back Cover	65.	230.

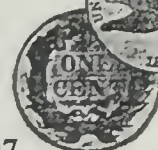
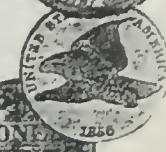
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Memorable Visits to The Philadelphia Mint

by Kari Brower

I have taken many trips to the Philadelphia Mint over the years. Here are three of my most memorable visits there.

In 1989, I was chairperson in charge of arranging a trip to the Philadelphia Mint for my local club - Ocean County Coin Club of Brick, N.J. But instead of taking a regular tour of the mint, which my club and I had done in the past, I wanted this visit to be different - something special that the club members would remember for years.

A Special Event

I decided to ask one of the Sculptor/Engravers of the Mint - who design U.S. coins - to give us a talk and presentation on how coins are designed.

First, I had to write John Martino, Superintendent of the Mint at the time, to ask for permission. Mr. Martino, in turn, got permission from Washington D.C., and my club was scheduled to hear a talk by John Mercanti on July 21, 1989.

When we got to the Mint, we were greeted by Tim Grant and Eleanor McKelvey, who work in the Public Relations Department at the Mint. We were escorted through a double door that is primarily used by Mint employees only. Once inside, I was checking my list of club members and guests, and I noticed a man had accidentally joined our group who didn't belong. He was then quickly but politely escorted back out of the double doors by Mint Security people.

Before we were allowed upstairs to the engraving floor, we had to leave behind



any cameras, as the Mint doesn't permit any pictures to be taken in that area.

"The President's Room"

Once on the engraving floor, we were ushered into a conference room called "The President's Room." We were informed that this room is used frequently by members of the U.S. Congress, as a meeting room for discussing legislation dealing with U.S. coinage. One of the first things I noticed as I entered were the galvanos on the walls of every President - from George Washington to the last President to hold office.

John Mercanti

After a brief presentation by Tim Grant, John Mercanti entered the room. He gave us a wonderful talk on how coins are designed, answered our questions, and autographed our information jackets (from coins he'd designed - which we'd brought with us).

After the presentation was over, I thought the highlight of the trip had ended. Our

club members and I went back downstairs to tour the Mint or other parts of the city.

Striking My Own Medal

While I was in the Mint's lobby, I decided to buy some medal planchets (\$1 apiece) and have them struck on an 1869 coin press. When it comes your turn to have your medals struck, you hand the cellophane-wrapped planchets to a Mint employee who unwraps each planchet and places it into the coin press. Then, they hand you a remote control button. When they say, "Ready," you press the button and strike your medal.

While I was in line waiting to strike my medals, I felt a tap on my shoulder. I naturally thought it was a club member wanting to know what we were going to do next. I turned around and saw John Mercanti, holding something wrapped in tissue paper. When he unwrapped it, I saw a beautiful plaster of Paris model of an eagle head, surrounded by 13 stars.

A Newly-Made Gift

He said he had just made it that morning, and noted that he couldn't autograph the back because it was still soft. He said, however, that once it was hardened I could mail it back to him and he would sign it. He also said that if it ever broke, he would fix it. I carefully placed the model in my pocketbook, and cautiously guarded it with my life!

I was so excited by this gift that I had to tour the Mint four times just to walk off the extra surge of adrenaline racing through my body. During my first time around, I met up with club member Chris Connell, and showed him my present. Then, I continued touring.

I have always enjoyed touring this Mint, ever since I first went there on a class trip

in 1976.

An Eagle Named Peter

When one first enters the Mint's lobby, there are many things to see. First, there is "Peter the Eagle." Peter is a stuffed American Bald Eagle who was a mascot of the U.S. Mint back in the 1830s. It was the first Bald Eagle held in captivity in America. He was the model for the eagle that was used on our coinage in the 1830s. Peter died as a result of an accident when he was hit by a flywheel that broke his wing.

Other things I saw in the lobby included beautiful mosaics showing how coins were minted throughout history, and the U.S. Mint Seal carved out of mahogany wood from Africa.

On the second floor, the mezzanine level, I looked down through a glass window to see how coins are made. The public is not allowed on the coin production floor because at times coins are ejected from coin presses at speeds over a hundred miles an hour, and they'd hit an object just like a bullet coming out of a gun.

Fascinating Exhibits

Also on the mezzanine level are exhibits that show the history of our country, using reproductions of U.S. documents, and with medals struck by the Mint. One of the exhibits mentions that Paul Revere, famous Boston patriot and silversmith, supplied copper that was used to create our nation's first coins. I found viewing these exhibits very enjoyable and educational.

A 1792 Coin Press

The mint has artifacts from all four former Philadelphia Mints, but I particularly liked the articles from the first U.S. Mint, built in 1792. Among these were a skeleton door key, sun-dried bricks that were excavated from a well, error coins struck in the early 1790s, pictures of the first Mint before it was demolished in 1911, a copy of an

expense ledger from the 1790s, and there was even a 1792 half dime on display. There was also an interesting display of a Mint office of 1910. But what interested me most of all was a 1792 coin press.

A few of us tried to get a closer look at that coin press (without going past the ropes closing it off), to see if there was a coin die still in there - but we couldn't tell.

Another impressive exhibit showed U.S. gold coins. Many of them were stuck off-center or had other errors.

I will never forget that particular trip. Nor will I forget another Mint trip sponsored by our club, when I took along my nephew, Bill. On that trip, I offered to buy Bill almost anything he wanted from the Mint's store. The store had toy cannons that came in small, medium and large sizes. Bill wanted a small cannon. I told him he could have a larger one, but he insisted that he wanted the small one. I'm sure most parents would be happy to have a child who is so easy to please.

On that day, I also remember that I bought an oval Indian Peace Medal, an item no longer offered there. And, later that day, we went on to tour the Franklin Mint.

Tight Security

The last trip I took to the Philadelphia Mint was in 1992, and again I was in charge of the trip for our local club. Again, I had obtained permission to have a Sculptor/Engraver speak to the group. But this time, we were visiting a government facility during the Persian Gulf War, so I had to give the Mint security forms with a list of member and guest names, addresses, social security numbers, and answers to questions like, "Have you ever been arrested or convicted of a crime?" And, before any of us could go through the double doors,

our forms were checked over carefully by Mint security. I took my niece, Amber, with me this time.

Mercanti Again

While our forms were being processed, we were given a personal, private tour of the Mint by one of the staff. It was at this time I learned that our guest speaker was going to be John Mercanti. I was thrilled, because I had sent him my plaster of paris model to be autographed some time ago, but he had been too busy to sign it.

After the tour, we went back downstairs. Security personnel had some additional questions to ask, but it wasn't too long before we could enter the restricted area. When we took our seats in the President's Room, John Mercanti entered and gave me by paster of paris model, signed and dated on the back. Then, he also presented a plaster model to Charlie Nowack, the club's current president.

Pig Sculptures

Mr. Mercanti told us that when he wasn't sculpturing eagles on coins, his favorite animals to sculpt were pigs! He said he would go to pig farms to draw the animals and then sculpt them later. On weekends, he would sell these at flea markets. Mr. Mercanti also told us that Mint employees are not allowed to carry money when they enter the building to go to work. Instead, they carry plastic "debit cards." When the workers want to buy food or drinks there, they insert their cards into machines that deduct the cost of the items from their weekly paychecks. During his talk, which was really a question-and-answer period this time, he showed one of his pig sculptures. A young girl who had correctly answered one of his questions was given the pig.

After the discussion period was over, Mr. Mercanti again signed information jackets

for anyone who had them.

"Let's Buy That...and That"

When we went downstairs, Amber and I toured the Mint again, and then visited the Mint store. Unlike my nephew, Bill, Amber wanted to buy everything in sight! We did buy a few items, but then I thought it best for us to go outside and tour some other areas of Philadelphia before I went broke.

Once outside, Amber and I walked to the Liberty Bell Pavilion to gaze upon one of the oldest and best known symbols of liberty. After a few minutes there, we walked to Independence Hall to take a tour of that building. But the lines were very long, waiting outside, and it was 100 degrees in Philadelphia that day, so we decided against touring the interior of that building. We also had planned to take a horse-drawn carriage ride, but the operators of those rides closed them down after the temperature passed 97 degrees -- to prevent the horses from overheating.

So, not knowing Philadelphia well, and the weather being so hot, Amber and I headed back to the Mint, where we spent the rest of the day.

Unforgettable

As I stated earlier, I will never forget my trips to the Philadelphia Mint, which happens to be the largest mint in the world. For those of you who have never been there, I highly recommend a visit. And, if you plan to go with a group, try to schedule a talk by a Sculptor/Engraver. I am sure you'll find it very interesting, informative and memorable.

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Kari Brower, a resident of Brick, N.J., is a member of PAN and the ANA, as well as her local club, Ocean County Coin Club. At the most recent ANA Convention in New York City, July 29-Aug. 3, 1997, her exhibit of modern mint medals won a first prize, also earning her the coveted Franklin Mint gold medal for exhibiting.
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Gerald T. Krupa - Numismatist

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Show Calendar

Sept. 13 - Greensburg, PA - Greensburg Coin Club Show, Greensburg Mall Comm. Room, Rte. 30.

Sept. 20,21 - Lancaster, PA - Red Rose Coin Club Show, Farm & Home Center, Rte. 72 at Rte. 30.

Sept. 20,21 - Indiana, PA - Indiana Coin Club Show, Best Western Univ. Inn, 1545 Wayne Av., Rte. 119S.

Sept. 26-28 - Strasburg, PA - 2nd Ann. Paper Money Show, Historic Strasburg Inn, Rte. 896 (near Lancaster).

Sept. 27 - Harrisburg, PA - Harrisburg Coin Club Show, Hbg. River Rescue Hdqrs., 1119 S. Cameron St.

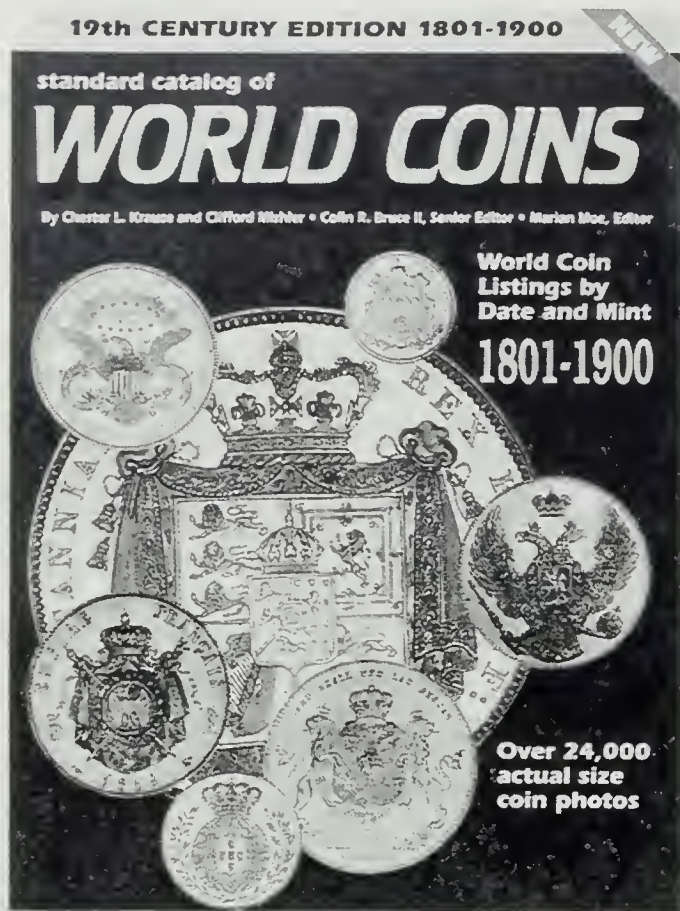
Oct. 4 - Reading, PA - Daniel Boone Coin Club Show, Lincoln Park Fire Hall, Newkirk Ave., Fritztown Rd.

Oct. 24-26 - Monroeville, PA - PAN CONVENTION, Pittsburgh Expo Mart, Business Route 22 (PA Turnpike Exit 6).

Nov. 1 - Hanover, PA - Hanover Numis. Society, Elks Lodge, 47 North Forney Ave.

Nov. 16 - Hermitage, PA - Hermitage Numis. Society, Holiday Inn of Hermitage, 3200 S. Hermitage Rd. (PA Exit 1N-Rte. 80, Rte. 18 - PA 60)

Two New World Coin Books



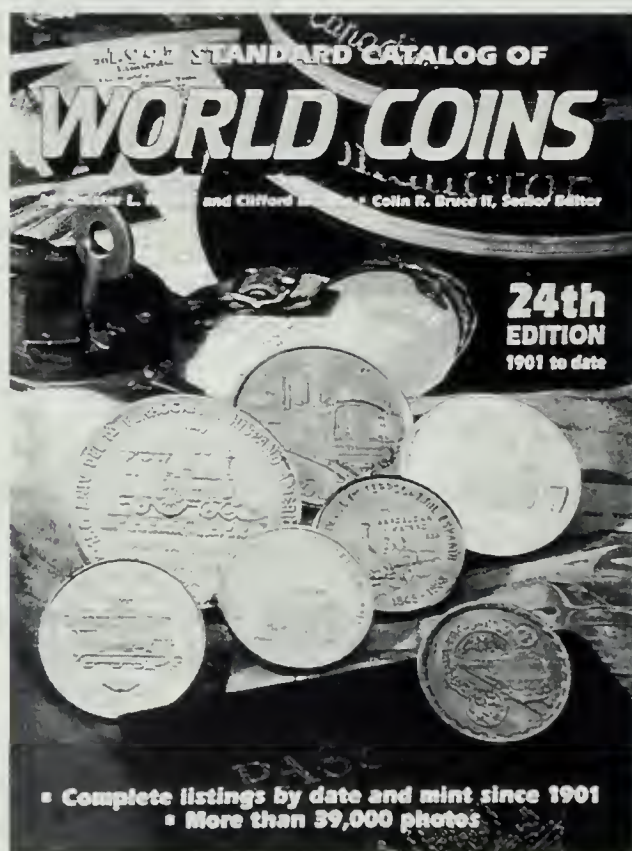
The Standard Catalog of World Coins, first published in 1972, has grown so that one volume can no longer hold all the information. Thus, it's now been organized into two volumes - one for 19th-century coins (above), and one for 20th-century coins (right).

The newest editions feature up-to-date values and photos for virtually all coins minted -- from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe.

The 19th-century book contains over 24,000 actual-size coin photos, including varieties and patterns, and the values are shown in up to four grades.

The 20th-century book boasts 1,696 pages, which also contain listings by date and mint, beginning with 1901, with values shown for up to four grades. More than 30,000 actual-size coin photos show circulating coins, bullion issues, mint and proof sets, patterns, historically-significant tokens, plus commemorative coins of the U.N. and World War II.

The authors are Chester L. Krause and Clifford Mishler. The books can be purchased from hobby dealers, or directly from the publishers for \$45 each. (Add \$3.25 shipping.) Write to Krause Pubs., Book Dept. QDR1-2, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990-0001.



...and a New Coin Honors the World Coin Books' 25th Year



In celebration of publication of the Standard Catalog of World Coins for 25 years, Krause Publications is offering for sale a commemorative coin struck specially for this event by the Pobjoy Mint Ltd. in agreement with the government of Liberia.

Liberia was chosen because of its historical ties with the United States; the country having been founded in the early 1800s by the American Colonization Society in an attempt to return freed slaves to Africa. As a result, Liberia was heavily influenced by American culture.

Limited to 2,500 pieces, the \$25 coin is 2.5 ounces of pure silver (.999 fine) and is two inches in diameter. The reverse depicts two children

examining a group of coins - including one each from the United States, England and Liberia, and an ancient coin featuring a representation of Pegasus - spilling from a globe of the world in the background. The legend reads, "25th Anniversary, 1972-1997, Standard Catalog of World Coins."

The obverse depicts the government arms of Liberia, and the legend, "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here, Republic of Liberia."

The uncirculated coin, valued at \$92.50, is available for purchase via a coupon offer in the newest edition of the Standard Catalog of World Coins - for a price of just \$55, while supplies last, with a one-year subscription to World Coin News.

MONEY TALKS: The Numismatic Radio Show

MONEY TALKS is a one-minute radio spot produced by the A.N.A. in Colorado Springs. They run daily, and each covers a different topic related to coins, medals, tokens or paper money. It began in October, 1992, and now reaches about 100 stations across the U.S.

If you'd like to hear the show on your local airwaves, write to your public broadcasting station and request **MONEY TALKS**. It's provided free of charge. For info, contact Education Director, Am. Numis. Assn., 818 N. Cascade Ave., Colo. Springs, CO 80903. (Phone (719) 632-2646)

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This one was broadcast June 2, 1997:

ENCASED POSTAGE

by Mark Van Winkle

The old saying, "necessity is the mother of invention" seems to be especially true during times of war. During the American Civil War, the public resorted to some unusual substitutes to replace coins that could no longer be found in circulation.

Today, we'll hear about encased postage stamps, used instead of coins for a short time during the Civil War.

In the war's first years, the South won most of the major battles. Public confidence in the Union's ability to win the war was low. As a result, the general public started hoarding coins of all metals -- gold, silver, and even copper. They did this so they would have some precious metal for their savings, just in case the South won the war and the Union fell to pieces. This created an instant shortage of circulating coins, and premiums were paid for small-denomination coins they could use for making change.

Some merchants were forced to issue their own money in the form of cardboard promises to pay if the holder of the note would bring the "store card" to their establishment. Others issued small copper tokens.

But one of the most ingenious coin substitutes was invented by a New York merchant named John Gault, who patented a process for encasing a postage stamp inside a brass holder and covering the front of the stamp with mica, a translucent material similar to glass. The process caught on very quickly, and Gault issued what became known as "encased postage" for no fewer than 31 merchants in the New England area. They served a dual purpose during their short life span -- providing much-needed small change, while also leaving the back of the brass encasement blank so the merchant could advertise his store or product.

In little more than a year, Union army victories rallied public support, and silver and copper coins began to reappear. Encased postage was soon forgotten by all but the few collectors of the day.

This has been "Money Talks." Today's program was written by Mark Van Winkle and underwritten by COIN PRICES magazine, providing its readers with the latest values on U.S. coins.

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1882-S	1885-P	1889-P	1899-O	1904-O
1883-P	1885-O	1896-P	1900-P	

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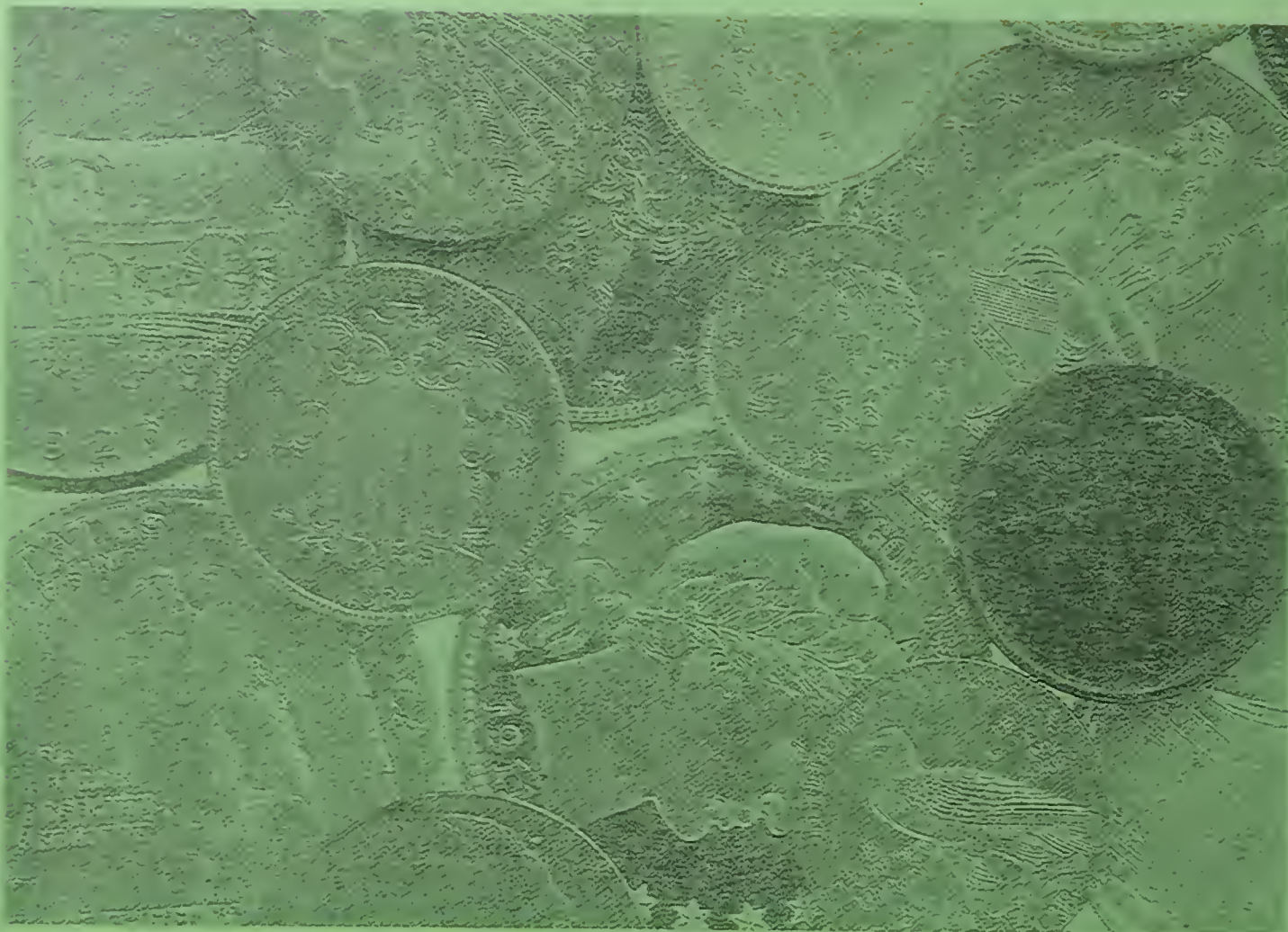
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